

International Stem Cell Forum Welcomes California Institute for Regenerative Medicine

Posted: February 10, 2006

SAN FRANCISCO—The International Stem Cell Forum (ISCF) announced at its annual meeting that the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) has been invited to join. The ISCF also welcomed the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the University of Milan.

"We are delighted that CIRM has been admitted to this prestigious organization that facilitates world-wide collaboration in stem cell research," said Zach Hall, President of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine. "Inclusion of the State of California, along with national research organizations, demonstrates international recognition of the important role of CIRM in stem cell research."

The invitation by ICSF was facilitated by the Medical Research Council of the UK and by the British Consulate-General in San Francisco

The ISCF was established four years ago to promote compatible ethical and scientific practices in research on human stem cells. The participating organizations span 17 countries and have agreed on a set of key principles for stem cell research, including:

- clarification of ethical issues and, where possible, the international harmonization of ethical standards;
- sharing of stem cell lines; and
- agreed standards for the characterization and registration of lines.

The ISCF encourages collaborative research across nations, boundaries and disciplines as well as the sharing of data, protocols and biomedical materials. The organization recognizes a variety of ethical positions and regulatory frameworks for stem cell research in different countries. The work of its various participating organizations covers the full range of stem cell types, from embryonic through to adult stem cells.

Background

The ISCF was set up in January 2003 with the aim of bringing together nine international funding agencies united in the belief that multilateral collaboration and informationsharing would accelerate progress and improve global practice in stem cell research. The agencies recognized that they had similarities in terms of scientific principles, scientific approaches and available resources, and a shared concern about the lack of standardized global criteria for the derivation, characterization and maintenance of stem cell lines. The Forum's membership comprises medical research funding organizations that are committed to advancing stem cell research. To find out more about the roles of these organizations, and their involvement in the field of stem cell research, click on the links below:

o Academy of Finland o Australian National Health and Medical Research Council o Canadian Institute for Health Research o Czech Science Foundation o Danish Centre for Stem Cell Research o Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft o INSERM (France) o Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities o Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation o Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development o RIKEN (Japan) o Singapore BioMedical Research Council o Swedish Research Council o Swiss National Science Foundation o UK Medical Research Council o US National Institutes of Health

For more information, please visit: <http://www.stemcellforum.org/>.

About CIRM

Governed by the ICOC, the CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was approved by California voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. For more information, please visit: www.cirm.ca.gov.

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